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ABSTRACT

Through numerous contributions from the field of linguistics, a modified language arts curriculum has resulted. Language arts teachers need to be thoroughly versed in content and methodology recommendations made by linguists. One such recommendation, for example, is that students should understand sentence patterns in English. These patterns include subject-predicate, subject-predicate-direct object, subject-linking verb-predicate adjective, and subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object patterns, among others. Students should also attach meaning to the concept of expanding sentences, sentences which can increase in size through the use of modifiers, appositives, dependent clauses, and compounding. It is also important for learners to understand concepts such as stress, pitch, and juncture. Learners should be able to change sentences in functional writing and speaking situations from kernel sentences to those involving questions, negatives, and commands or requests. Finally, students, with teacher guidance, need to understand the concept of usage as it relates to standard and nonstandard English in oral and written communication of content. (MM)

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LINGUISTICS AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The contributions of linguists in the language arts curriculum have been numerous. Through these contributions, a modified curriculum has resulted. Teachers of language arts need to be throughly versed in content and methodology recommendations made by linguists. The curriculum has changed much due to input from linguists in the language arts curriculum.

Patterns of Sentences

Selected pupils enter the school setting speaking the English language rather proficiently. They generally have little or no knowledge of sentence patterns and yet effective communication on their developmental level is definitely in evidence. A rich learning environmnet must continually be provided so that learners may enrich their speaking and listening vocabularies to develop further skills in the oral use of language.

Pupils in the school setting need to understand and appreciate how the English language operates. As learners progress through sequential school years, they should experience continuous success in achieving relevant objectives in the language arts curriculum.

The teacher, alert to the present achievement level of each pupil, must provide stimulating learning activities to motivate learners in understanding structure and patterns in the English language. The easiest sentence pattern for most learners to understand generally is the noun-verb or subject-predicate pattern. The teacher can select a subject-predicate sentence pattern from an experience chart developed by pupils with teacher guidance. The teacher may also ask pupils to give a sentence of two words pertaining to a picture on the bulletin board or objects at a learning center. Contributions made by pupils must be respected. As an additional approach to use in having pupils understand sentence patterns,

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the teacher could write two words on the chalkboard resulting in a subject-predicate sentence.

The following illustrates the noun-verb or subject-predicate sentence pattern.

1. Lions roar.
2. Birds fly.
3. Boys walk.
4. Girls swim.
5. Babies cry.

In each of these sentences pupils may provide words which replace the verb or predicate. Learners need to be actively involved in presenting these words. Thus, the teacher might ask, "What else do lions do?" Pupils may respond with the following: "walk", "run", "jump", "eat", and "sleep". Pupils may then be guided to notice that the sentence pattern stays the same; however, other words have been utilized in place of the original verb or predicate.

In sequence, the teacher could have pupils think of words to replace the noun or subject of the sentence. In the sentence "Lions roar", what other animals might take the place of the word "lions"? Pupils may respond with words such as "tigers", "giraffes", "dogs", and "wildcats". Pupils must have ample concrete and semi-concrete experiences when participating in ongoing learning activities, such as in viewing models and pictures of animals.

A second sentence pattern, not necessarily in sequence taught to pupils, might pertain to pupils developing understandings of the noun-verb-noun or subject-predicate-direct object pattern.

1. John threw the baseball.
2. Ralph held the bat.
3. Kelley met her friends.

4. Nancy bought a doll.

In each of these sentences, pupils may present a word which takes the place of the subject, the predicate, or the direct object. The concepts of "subject", "predicate", and "direct object" may be used by the teacher when referring to specific words in a sentence; however, pupils definitely should not be forced to use these terms when oral or written communication is being utilized. Generally, pupils will attach meaning to and use these concepts in speaking and writing at the appropriate developmental level.

A third sentence pattern to be studied by pupils would pertain to the noun-linking verb- adjective or subject-linking verb- predicate adjective pattern.

1. The house looked beautiful.

2. The vase was decorative.

3. The owl was brown.

4. The candy was delicious.

Each of these sentences has a subject, such as the word "house" in sentence one and "vase" in sentence two. The words "house" and "vase" in sentences one and two are nouns. Why are these words nouns? They can be changed from singular to plural or plural to singular in context. "House" is singular, while "houses" is plural. "Vase" is singular, while "vases" is plural. The word "looked" in sentence one and the word "was" in sentence two are linking verbs. Why are these words verbs? Verbs are words which can be changed from past tense to present tense and present tense to past tense, in context. Thus, the word "looked" pertains to a completed action and indicates past tense; however, the word "look" indicates present tense. The word "was" is in past tense, however, the word "is" is in present tense.

Interesting learning experiences can be provided whereby understandings may be developed by pupils in a meaningful way pertaining to the following: "singular" and "plural", "present tense" and "past tense". For example, the teacher might have one boy walk across the front of the room. Other pupils could give a sentence such as the following pertaining to the dramatization: The boy walks. Next, the teacher may call for a second boy to come to the front of the room and join in the same act. The resulting sentence to describe the dramatization reads as follows: The boys walk. In learning experiences such as these, pupils may realize in a concrete, meaningful way the concepts of "singular" and "plural".

Again, the boy (or boys) could walk across the room and viewers give the following sentence: The boy walks (present tense). Once the act has been completed, the resulting sentence might be the following: The boy walked (past tense). Thus, with a variety of concrete learning experiences, pupils may develop understandings pertaining to "present tense" and "past tense". The sentence patterns used in illustrating concepts pertaining to nouns and verbs pertain to the subject-predicate or noun-verb pattern.

A fourth sentence pattern for pupils to attach meaning is the noun-linking verb- noun or subject-predicate-predicate nominative pattern.

1. John was a coach.
2. Bill is an umpire.
3. The man is a grocer.
4. Sally is a singer.

In each of these sentences, the predicate nominative equals the subject of the sentence joined by a linking verb. In sentence one, John equals coach. In sentence two, Bill equals umpire while man equals grocer in sentence three.

A fifth pattern of sentence involves pupils inductively developing

understandings of the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object or noun-verb-noun pattern. The following would be examples of this sentence pattern:

1. John gave Jerry a gift.
2. George presented Alice a present.
3. Mark wrote Jim a note.

Pupils at Christmas time and at the time birthdays are celebrated frequently use the subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object sentence pattern. For example, at Christmas time, a child may say the following: "Daddy gave me a bicycle." Or, when a child's birthday is being celebrated, the involved pupil may say, "Mother gave me a basketball."

Sentence patterns that pupils acquire should meet the following criteria:

1. Responses should come from pupils.
2. Learning by discovery is to be encouraged.
3. Pupils need to relate sentence patterns to their own unique background of experiences.
4. Learners must attach meaning to sentence patterns.
5. A variety of methods should be utilized in helping learners attach meaning to diverse patterns of sentences.
6. Learning activities should be interesting to pupils.
7. Provision must be made for individual differences; not all learners in a class achieve at the same level of achievement.

Expanding Sentences

Sentences are short, choppy, and lack description if the concept of expansion is not utilized in writing situations. The following structural sentence patterns lack expansion:

1. Boys run. (Subject-predicate or noun-verb pattern.)
2. Abe caught the ball. (Subject-predicate-direct object or noun-verb-noun pattern.)
3. The orange was delicious. (Subject-linking verb-predicate adjective or noun-linking verb- predicate adjective pattern.)
4. Curt is an auctioneer. (Subject-linking verb-predicate nominative or noun-linking verb-noun pattern.)
5. Bill gave John a top. (Subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object or noun-verb-noun-noun pattern.)

Each of the above sentences is complete and recommendable in speaking and writing. However, clarity in writing in many situations indicates the need for expanding each of the sentences. In the first sentence above (Boys run.) pupils might be asked to tell more about the boys. For example, what kind of boys were these? The following examples are given as possible learner responses:

1. Tall boys run.
2. Small boys run.
3. Tall boys with blue coats run.
4. Small boys in the yard run.

Next, pupils may expand the predicate part of the sentence. For example, how did the boys run?

1. Boys run slowly.
2. Boys run very rapidly.
3. Boys run with great speed.

A further question can be asked of pupils pertaining to where boys run. Pupils may give responses such as the following:

1. Boys run in the yard.

2. Boys run here.

3. Boys run around the building.

In the sentences above, pupils might think of their own personal experiences in terms of where they have run. Learners may also think of "when" boys run. Examples include the following:

1. Boys run today.

2. Boys run in the morning.

3. Boys run at noon.

Pupils with teacher guidance should have numerous opportunities to expand sentences using modifiers for the subject and/or predicate parts of sentences.

Learners inductively may also expand sentences through the use of appositives. Compare the first sentence with the second sentence.

1. Mr. Jones lives on Line Street.

2. Mr. Jones, our teacher, lives on Line Street.

In the first sentence, the subject-predicate pattern is in evidence. "Mr. Jones" is the subject while "lives" is the predicate. The words "on Line Street" involve the use of a prepositional phrase used as an adverb. These words tell where Mr. Jones lives. In the second sentence, the words, "our teacher", are another name for Mr. Jones. Thus, an appositive has been added.

Dependent clauses may also be utilized to expand sentences. Notice the following two sentences:

1. John likes to swim.

2. John sleeps much.

These two sentences may be written as one sentence, thus eliminating short, choppy statements in writing.

Although John sleeps much, he likes to swim.

In this sentence the dependent clause is "Although John sleeps much". "John" is the subject and "sleeps" is the predicate. The dependent clause does not stand by itself but makes sense when it is related to the independent clause. The independent clause is "he like to swim". The word "he" is the subject and "likes" is the predicate. Thus, sentences can be expanded through the use of dependent clauses. The dependent clauses are underlined in the following sentences.

1. If Jim can earn enough money, he will buy a new basketball.
2. The boy who works in the grocery store is our neighbor.
3. The dog that wore a new collar is my pet.

Pupils will realize that dependent clauses generally do not make sense by themselves. The dependent clauses add meaning to an independent clause. Pupils should have ample experience in expanding any sentence pattern

Pupils also need to have ample experiences when readiness for learning is in evidence pertaining to expanding sentences through compounding. Notice the following sentences.

1. Sally sings.

2. Sally dances.

These sentences follow the subject-predicate pattern. Monotonous writing is in evidence if all written work consisted of short sentences. The two sentences may be rewritten by compounding the predicate part: Sally sings and dances. Two sentences may also be rewritten by compounding the subject:

1. Jim played baseball.

2. Owen played baseball.

3. Jim and Owen played baseball.

Sentence numbers one and two above pertain to the subject-predicate-direct object pattern. Sentence number three compounds the subjects of sentences one and two.

Stress, Pitch, and Juncture

Pupils need to become thoroughly familiar with meanings and applications of concepts stress, pitch, and juncture.

When words are pronounced within a sentence, differences in stress occur. Study the following sentence: "Hand me the toys."

If the word "hand" is stressed more than the other words in the sentence, this means that the toys should be handed rather than thrown or tossed. Stressing the word "me" more than the other words in the same sentence indicates that the toys should go to the person who is speaking rather than to any other individual. If the word "toys" is stressed more than any other word in the sentence, the emphasis is upon "toys" rather than a book,

pamphlet, or other object.

Pupils should practice speaking using the same sentence in meaningful ways and stress a different selected word each time more than any other word in the same sentence. A tape recorder might be utilized in this learning activity. Pupils may then perceive how a specific sentence changes in meaning when a selected word is stressed mor than other words within the sentence. Linguists recognize four degrees of stress. Pupils with teacher guidance should practice using different degrees of stress when communicating ideas orally in speaking experiences.

Pupils should also have ample opportunities to practice using pitch in oral communication of ideas. Linguists recognize four degrees of pitch. Selected words in a sentence may be pitched higher or lower and thus change the meaning of a sentence. In some cases, words will be pitched higher at the end of a sentence when questions are asked. However, not all words are pitched higher at the end of sentence when questions are asked. Consider the following sentences:

1. Did you do any reading today?

2. Bill has moved?

In the second sentence, the ending word is pitched higher as compared to the ending word in the first sentence. Pupils with the use of a cassette recorder should practice oral communication involving interrogative sentences. Learners may notice the degree of pitch of ending words in a sentence. Pupils may also notice how other words are pitched within these sentences as well as in imperative, declarative, and exclamatory types of sentences. Attempts should be made in identifying different degrees of pitch of words within sentences.

Much misinterpretation of sentence meaning occurs when juncture is not

utilized properly in speaking and writing. Consider the following incorrectly punctuated sentence: At the picnic jello salad ham sandwiches and milk were served. It is difficult to determine how many different kinds of food were served. The following might be possibilities depending upon pauses in oral communication or commas in written communication within each sentence:

1. At the picnic jello, salad, ham, sandwiches, and milk were served.
2. At the picnic jello salad, ham, sandwiches, and milk were served.
3. At the picnic jello salad, ham sandwiches, and milk were served.

Pupils should practice reading and speaking different sentences where proper placement of commas (or pausing adequately between words) is important. The meaning of a sentence can certainly change depending upon emphasized pauses within a specific sentence. As a further example, pertaining to juncture, consider the following sentences:

1. Leon, my cousin, works in a factory.
2. Leon, my cousin works in a factory.

In the first sentence, the speaker is stating a fact about Leon. In the second sentence, the speaker is speaking directly to Leon. Using the same words in a sentence, meanings can change depending upon printed commas or orally emphasized pauses within a sentence.

Generating New Sentences.

Pupils should have meaningful experiences pertaining to how a declarative sentence, for example, can be changed to other kinds of sentences such as an interrogative sentence. First of all, pupils on the appropriate developmental level need to understand and attach meaning to a kernal sentence. A kernal sentence is simple and declarative. A declarative sentence states a fact. The subject of the kernal sentence is the actor, not the receiver

of the action. The following are examples of kernal sentences:

1. John plays baseball.
2. Paul works in a store.
3. Josephine eats in the cafeteria.

In each of the above sentences, a fact is stated. Thus, a declarative sentence is in evidence. Also, in each of the sentences, the subject performs the action. That is, in sentence number one, John does the playing. In sentence two, Paul does the working, while in sentence three Josephine does the eating. Each of these sentences may be transformed or changed to a different kind of sentence other than the declarative sentence. In sentence number one which reads, "John play baseball", the pitch of the ending word may be raised resulting in an interrogative sentence. "John plays baseball?" A few changes may also be made in the original sentence and result in the question: "Does John play baseball?" To change the original declarative sentence to a negative, the following sentence can result: "John does not play baseball." The original declarative sentence might also be rewritten to state a request: "John, please play baseball." A command may result when making the following selected changes: "John,play baseball." Imperative sentences result when requests or commands are in evidence. Very few changes need to be made when changing declarative sentences to the following:

1. Sentences which ask questions.
2. Sentences which issue commands or requests.
3. Sentences which show strong feeling.

In the declarative sentence reading, "John plays baseball", the statement can be transformed to read, "John plays baseball!" The latter sentence

reveals strong feeling and states an exclamatory sentence. The same words were used for the declarative and exclamatory sentences. The only difference was in the end punctuation marks. Declarative sentences end with periods whild exclamatory sentences end with exclamation points.

Usage and Communication of Ideas

The words a speaker uses when communicating ideas orally or in writing are a matter of choice. Middle class individuals in society, in most cases, demand that standard English be spoken. However, effective communication also takes place with the use of nonstandard English. Contrast the following pairs of sentences.

1. They have completed their work.

   They done their work.

2. I haven't any money.

   I ain't got no money.

3. I ran in a race.

   I ranned in a race.

4. He is going to town.

   He goin to town.

No doubt, effective communication can take place when using either standard or nonstandard English. In selected environments, nonstandard English is accepted as good and sounds right to its users. In other environments, standard English only, is acceptable. An important item to remember is that the teacher accept all pupils as having much worth if standard or nonstandard English is spoken. Each person is important in a democracy. Respect for others is the heart of democratic thinking. Each pupil must be guided in achieving optimum development.

Teachers in the past felt that pupils using nonstandard English should

be corrected on the scene so that standard English alone might be an important end result. Linguists have stated the following for not using this approach:

1. The pupil may come to feel that his/her home environment is inferior since nonstandard English is unacceptable in school.
2. Pupils cannot make rapid changes when switching from nonstandard to standard English in the school and class setting.
3. Negative attitudes are developed toward speaking and writing when teachers criticize the speaking efforts of those who speak nonstandard English.
4. Basically, it does not help most pupils in making desired changes to speaking standard English.

Pupils who speak nonstandard English can learn to speak standard English in the following ways:

1. by listening to the teacher who may serve as a model in speaking standard English.
2. by reading library books which utilize standard English in its content.
3. by listening to pupils speak where standard English is used.
4. by listening to tapes and records pertaining to content in relevant units of study where meaningful standard English is used by the speaker.
5. by viewing and listening to content in slides, films, and filmstrips where standard English is used.
6. by listening to presentations by resource personnel who utilize standard English in communicating ideas.

Pupils can learn to speak standard English in school and yet respect,

as well as use, nonstandard English in the home environment. Thus, usage in speaking and writing pertains to choices of words and word order that are made in communicating ideas.

In Summary

It is important for pupils to ultimately understand patterns of sentences in the English language. These sentence patterns include subject-predicate, subject-predicate-direct object, subject-linking verb-predicate adjective, subject-linking verb- predicate nominative, and subject-predicate- indirect object- direct object pattern. Pupils should also attach meaning to the concept of expanding sentences. Sentences may be expanded through the use of modifiers, appositives, dependent clauses, and compounding. It is important for learners to attach meaning to concepts such as stress, pitch, and juncture. Meanings of sentences change when utilizing these concepts.

Learners should be able to change sentences in functional writing and speaking situations from kernal sentences to those involving the asking of questions, the stating of negatives, and the issuing of commands or requests. Pupils with teacher guidance need to understand the concept of usage as it relates to standard and nonstandard English in oral and written communication of content.